Mike and Melissa Episode 15- Mike and Melissa Go To a Darker Place

scene 1- ext. kalamazoo COLLEGE, 1/16/2009, 9PM

A young version of me is standing curbside along a busy road. He leans forward as if to step out in front of traffic, then pulls back. Meanwhile, the present me is standing in the shadows, observing the scene in pensive silence. MELISSA pops in next to me.

melissa

There you are! I've been looking all over for you.

mike

Oh, hey. Sorry about that.

Kiss.

MIKE

(tapping brain)

It's amazing how easy it is to get lost in this thing...

MELISSA

Tell me about it. I've been living in there 21 years and I still don't totally know my way around. (Beat) So where are we?

MIKE

Freshman year at K College. Friday night in January. My dorm rooms full of people who think I'm a freak, my sister's out of town, and my friends at Western are out at the movies. So here I am all alone in a city I hate debating whether I should jump out and finally end it all...

Past me moves forward, then moves back again. MELISSA caresses my face with her hand.

MELISSA

Aw Mike... how could you ever think like that? Think about how many people would have their lives ruined if you did something like that.

MIKE

Ruined may be a strong word, but-

MELISSA

NO! I mean it!

MIKE

...Well... keep watching.

My past phone goes off. My past self picks it up. It's PAST DAD.

past mike

Hello...?

past dad

Mike... I read the email you just sent me. Are you okay?

mike

Oh yeah I sent a bunch of cryptic emails to my parents-

MELISSA

Shh!

PAST MIKE

...No...

PAST DAD

Are you thinking about hurting yourself?

PAST MIKE

(moving away from edge)

...No...

PAST DAD

Okay, well if you do, you call me or your mom immediately. Okay?

PAST MIKE

Okay... can you come pick me up tomorrow morning?

PAST DAD

Of course. Do you have a place to stay tonight?

PAST MIKE

I'll find somewhere.

PAST DAD

I can come get you now if you-

My phone beeps and I check it.

PAST MIKE

Hang on, I just got a text from Joe. I'll see if I can meet up with him.

PAST DAD

Okay. I love you.

PAST MIKE

I love you too. Bye.

I hang up and check my text as I walk away from the road.

MELISSA

For what it's worth, I'm really glad you didn't do anything.

mike

Me too.

We embrace and kiss.

Mike

Tell me something, did you arrange it so that my dad would call me right then?

MELISSA

Pfft don't be silly. I don't have control over that... or do I?

I eye her as she grins. We kiss again.

MELISSA

What do you say we get out of here? Go to your happy place for a bit?

MIKE

Please. Let's get as far away from here as possible.

MELISSA

Alrighty then. TAXI!

She raises her hand. A taxi cab pulls over. We get in.

scene 2- int. scrap's taxi cab, ???

SCRAPS is in the driver's seat.

scraps

Weryouwango?

MELISSA

Happy place, Scraps! And step on it!

SCRAPS

Yogowat! HAHAHA! Puonyobelt.

MIKE

What'd he say-

He floors it and cuts everyone behind him off as he speeds into my subconscious superhighway. I get thrown around the car and stuff. He breaks suddenly and I slam into the seat in front of me.

MELISSA

Oh he said put on your seatbelt.

MIKE

GEE, THANKS FOR TELLING ME NOW-

MELISSA

You're welcome.

MIKE

!!!!!!!!!!!!!

intro sequence!!!

We're screaming along again. I finally recognize SCRAPS.

MIKE

Hey, aren't you the sax guy from the jazz lounge?

MELISSA

Being a jazz man doesn't pay the bills. He's also a taxi man.

SCRAPS

Gatpaydembles! Yanothat haha.

MIKE

Wow. And all this time I thought I had it rough...

MELISSA

Dude, you've got it pretty darn good.

MIKE

I guess... why don't I feel like it a lot of the time?

MELISSA

Because you're a whiner.

MIKE

Hey...

MELISSA

Kidding! But seriously, your problem is you tend to focus on what you don't have instead of what you DO. I mean, how many people have their very own superforest in their brain that they can go to whenever they're down? Oh, we're here by the way.

They're there (by the way).

scene 3- int. mike's happy place, noonish, ???

We get out of the car. I give SCRAPS his pay.

SCRAPS

Muchowpwecated. Yall havvun now! HAHAHA!!!

He speeds off and disappears. MELISSA takes my hand and starts leading me away.

MELISSA

Come on. Let's get you to the river!

MIKE

Heck yeah- Wait a minute... oh, poop. I forgot to give Scraps a tip.

MELISSA

Oh, don't worry about that. Check this out.

MEL snaps her fingers. SCRAPS comes driving back. MEL chucks a bunch of money in front of the car, positioned perfectly where he can snag it without stopping.

SCRAPS

Yeawoi!!!

He speeds off again. MEL leads me away. Cut to us at our river spot, skinny dippin' of course. MEL swims over to me.

MELISSA

So ya doin' better?

MIKE

Much. I should go here more often instead of back to those stupid Kalamazoo memories.

MEL puts her hand on my face.

MELISSA

You know, Mike, it actually may be a good thing that you revisit your lousy memories. I mean, remember when I offered to erase them all?

MIKE

I don't remember you offering to erase THOSE. If you had, maybe I would have-

MELISSA

False. Remember the point I made?

MIKE

Yeah...

MELISSA

What was it?

MIKE

...I need those memories to remind myself how much better I am now and why I need to keep working to better myself or some shit.

MELISSA

Well... without the attitude, more or less.

MIKE

Attitude.

MELISSA

Yes.

Kiss.

MIKE

Can we stay here for the rest of the day? Or forever???

MELISSA

Nope. In fact...

Snap of the fingers. It melts away into...

scene 4- ext. mlb building, 3/11/2011, 10AM

Turns out this whole time I've been walking to class. MEL plops down beside me.

MELISSA

Sorry, babe. Them's the breaks. We can go back in a few days if you need to, though.

MIKE

...Well in that case, let's go to my second favorite place in the world.

MELISSA

Anthropology lecture?

MIKe

Guess again...

I turn around. MEL grabs me.

MELISSA

Come on, you already walked all the way out here-

MIKE

BUT I DON'T WANT TO!!!

MELISSA

YOU ALREADY DID, DUMBHEAD!!!

scene 5- int. mlb aud...4?, 3/11/2011, 10:30AM

We're watching a movie about the effects of genocide in a Bosnian/Serbian village. All the other students are on their computers. I stare on, troubled. MEL is there too.

MIKE

Great. I'm so happy that I decided to go to class today.

MELISSA

Come on, Mike. It's important to know this stuff. Even if it is a bit depressing.

MIKE

Funny. My peers don't seem to think so.

I scan the room.

MIKE

Ugh... I don't know what's more depressing. The video or the fact that nobody gives a shit. I mean, for god's sake, can't you wait an hour without checking your goddamn Facebook?

MELISSA

Well... you know... maybe they had to check something really important or... eh, I'm not going to try to defend them.

MIKE

There is no defense. If you don't want to be here, don't come to class. For example...

I move to get up. MEL blocks me off.

MELISSA

No.

MIKE

UGH!

MELISSA

Look. Emotional stuff.

An old BOSNIAN WOMAN is getting all waterworks.

bosnian woman

(in Bosnian)

He was my neighbor for 20 years... I trusted him with my kids... then next day he turns around and wants to kill them... I just don't understand it... how can a person do that to their neighbor? What kind of world are we living in nowadays?

She cries more. I look disturbed. MEL looks sad. The two ASSHOLES in front of me whisper among themselves.

some asshole #1

Check it out, dude.

They start playing porn on one of their computers.

some asshole #2

Aw, sick! That's crazy, man. How did she fit that in there?

SOME ASSHOLE #1

I dunno. But she's not done. Can you say snowglobe?

MIKE

...REALLY???

scene 6- ext. east jefferson street, 3/11/2011, noon

MEL and I are walking home, with me giving her a piggy back ride. It's cold, and everything's dead. I seem distraught.

MIKE

I mean... REALLY???

MELISSA

Yuck. Really. Good thing that scene was largely exaggerated. Otherwise I'd be REALLY worried about this generation.

MIKE

Wait... what?

MELISSA

Never mind.

I shiver.

MIKE

I hate this weather. Shouldn't it be getting warm by now? Isn't it Spring, technically?

MELISSA

Not for another couple weeks, no...

MIKE

Poop on that! I've had enough of winter!

MELISSA

Yeah... I guess it would be nice to see some leaves on the trees again.

MIKE

You know where there's lots of trees and they've got leaves and critters and all that good stuff year round? My happy place.

MELISSA

We can't go there yet, Mike...

MIKE

Come on, Mel! Why not?

MELISSA

I don't want you to lose yourself there. If you try to go there too often... well, bad things happen.

MIKE

Better than this. I mean, for pete's sake! This street reeks of death!

MELISSA

Er... I hope you're not saying that because...

I look over and see a dead skunk in the middle of the road.

MIKE

Goddamn it...

MEL hops off my back and drags me along.

MELISSA

Come on, your house is right here.

I let her take me, but I'm trying to shove my free hand into my ear. MEL brushes it away.

MELISSA

Cut it out.

scene 7- int. mike's living room, 3/11/2011, 12:30PM

I'm sitting there at my computer, surfing the web. I stop, and try to shove my same hand into my same ear. MEL brushes it away again.

MELISSA

Cut it out. Here, you're home now. It's nice, warm, and ya got me. So what more could you possibly need?

MIKE

Yeah, I guess that's not bad.

MELISSA

Pfft not bad...

She leans in and we start smooching.

MELISSA

So... you got the rest of the day off. What should we do first?

MIKE

I got an idea... TIM AND ERIC CLIPS!!!

I pull up some Tim and Eric clips. MEL's like "dude..."

MELISSA

It's funny. You criticize your classmates for wasting time on their computers when a depressing film is playing. But then you come home and waste time on your computer when I want to get frisky.

MIKE

Yeah, but... we can get frisky AFTER Tim and Eric.

MELISSA

If I'm still in the mood.

MIKE

Ah, you will be.

MELISSA

Yeah, I will be.

Kiss. MEL peeps at the screen.

MELISSA

Hey, what's that?

I look at a link that says "8.8 earthquake in Japan, nuclear crisis imminent". I instantly click on it and read a bunch of stuff and watch a bunch of videos about it. Then I lean forward, face in my hands.

MIKE

Fuck...

Long silence.

MELISSA

So... put on pussydoodles?

COMMERCIAL BREAK

scene 8- int. mike's bedroom, 3/14/2011, 5PM

I'm there in my bed buried under my covers. MEL sees this, sighs, and wiggles in next to me and cuddles up.

MELISSA

Hey. (beat) Still sad about the quake?

I nod.

MELISSA

Want to talk about it?

MIKE

It's not just the quake... and the meltdown... it's everything.

MELISSA

Come on. You don't mean EVERYthing.

MIKE

It's just... things like this make me think... thousands lives were lost in a few seconds... and stuff like this is happening all the time lately... what if the world really DOES end in-

MELISSA

Mike, don't tell me you're buying into this 2012 bullshit-

MIKE

No, but... I mean, the way things are going... so many lives are cut short before they get a chance to grow up and make a name for themselves... what if I'm one of those lives tomorrow?

MELISSA

You won't be.

MIKE

How do you know that? And if not tomorrow, what about the next year? Five years? Ten? I mean... what if my life was all for nothing?

MELISSA

Mike, look at me.

I don't.

MELISSA

LOOK AT ME! Your life is not for nothing!

MIKE

Come on, Mel. I'm nothing. I've wasted my life and I could die tomorrow. Maybe I should just get it over with and-

I start to get up. MEL stops me.

MELISSA

MIKE!!!

MEL is on the verge of tears.

MIKE

...I'm sorry... I just...

MELISSA

Shh...

We embrace.

MIKE

I need to go to my happy place.

MELISSA

Uh... that may not be the best of ideas right now...

MIKE

I need to go there now!

MELISSA

...Okay...

She grabs me and pulls me in to myself.

scene 9- int. my brain, ???

We're making the usual descent into my brain. The trip is a lot more turbulent today though, with black flack everywhere.

MELISSA

Shit, hold on!

She pulls me in close.

MIKE

What's going on? What's all that black crap?

MELISSA

Flack from bad thoughts. They're trying to keep you out of your happy place.

MIKE

But I WANT to go there!

MELISSA

You do, but your depression doesn't. But we should be able to get through if-

DIRECT HIT!!! We get separated and start tailspinning down in opposite directions. I wind up crash landing in...

scene 10- ext. mike's darker place, ???

A miserable, dreary gray expanse of dead forest, sludgy water, and fog. It's almost impossible to tell where the land, the sky, and the water end and where the other begins. Imagine a nightmare version of the Pacific Northwest or Norwegian fjord. The beginning of TO DROWN by AGALLOCH plays as I get up and explore the dismal scene.

I walk along the banks of the river, which are stained with tar and littered with refuse and animal bones. Including... the deer from episode 10. I quickly turn away from it and keep walking.

I walk to an overlook and see the entire decimated landscape. I notice a big section without trees that has a busy roadway running through it.

Finally I make it to the beaches of a barren lake.

The whole time I take in my surroundings with a mixture of sorrow, disgust, and hopelessness. You know, typical Black Metal mindset.

As I'm strolling the beach I see MELISSA sitting there, blankly staring out into the gray horizon.

MIKE

Melissa!

MELISSA stares at me with no response. She seems a little transparent.

MIKE

Are you alright?

MELISSA

No... Mike... we need to get out of this place.

MIKE

Sure, let me just imagine us to a different place-

MELISSA

It doesn't work like that here. Mike... we're stuck in your darker place.

MIKE

My darker place? So... basically the complete opposite of my happy place, right?

MELISSA

Yup... does the place look familiar to you at all?

MIKE

Parts of it are, at least...

MELISSA

They should. You've come here many times before. Well, not literally, this place is just a metaphor your brain created a few minutes ago. But you get it.

MIKE

Yeah. So whenever I revisit a bad memory I've been going here?

MELISSA

In a sense.

MIKE

Well... that's lame. This place is lame.

MELISSA

No kidding. You know what the worst part is though? Since I'm a positive figment in a negative place, my life force is draining... if we stay heretoo long, I might disappear forever...

I sit there in terrified silence.

MIKE

Here... let me help you up...

I help her to her feet. She's weak so I need to support her.

MIKE

I'll get you out of here...

MELISSA

Okay...

She gives a weak lick to my neck. I give a tender, emotional lick back. We walk into the abyss.

MIKE

Any idea where a way out might be?

MELISSA

I'm guessing it's somewhere within...

MIKE

Is that like a lame way of saying I'm going to have to find the way out through rediscovering self esteem or some shit?

MELISSA

Maybe. I actually have no idea where the exit is.

MIKE

Great. It's adventure time then-

An ominous rumble.

MIKE

Hey... is there anything here that' gonna...

MELISSA

There are a few wandering memories that might try to attack us. But for the most part we should be fine. Unless...

S_____ shows up... a putrid harpy with long flowing black hair and a body of wispy smoke. MELISSA looks threatened, contemplating whether she should defend me or hide behind me (deciding to do the former). I regard her with disgust (S_____, not MELISSA).

MIKE

Great. Just what I needed.

s_____

Hello again, Mike. Nice to see you've finally found where you really belong.

mike

Not even. Lemme guess though, you're the overlord of this terrible place? It'd make sense, since after all... you're terrible... HARPY!

S_____

You never were very clever. In fact, you were never much of anything. Maybe it would have been better if you had walked in front of a car back in Kalamazoo. At least do everyone else a favor.

MIKE

No... I shouldn't have...

I appear to be losing confidence. MEL sees this and is now getting ready for a fight.

S_____

Right. Because you've got so much going on now. And you have such a bright future. Face it. You don't belong in the world. You can't even find a real girlfriend. And if that's the best imaginary girlfriend you can come up with... well, I guess you can't do anything right, can you?

MEL has already rushed out and clocked her in the face, knocking S_____ to the ground. A DARKER PLACE by ENSLAVED begins to play as the bitch looks at me.

S_____

Your skank really shouldn't have done that. Now I'm going to show you my true powers. Mike, prepare yourself... you're about to see the world for

what it really is. You're about to realize your own futility and the pointlessness of your existence. You're about to be consumed and trapped in the screams and agony from within you! And you will die trying to escape FROM A DARKER PLACE!!!

She disappears. The sky turns black. MELISSA and I look around. Through the trees we see a wall of water AND IT'S HEADED RIGHT FOR US!!! MELISSA grabs my wrist and we run for dear life as it sweeps up everything in front of it. We head for the hills. As we look back the wave is taking up the entire valley.

As we're running, suddenly mutilated hands begin to reach up from the earth and tear at our skin. We fight them off, but more continue to slow us down. Soon, full bodies are beginning to arise; horrid semi-human zombies/tar monsters looking to tear us apart. We push them off and run to the bottom of a precipice. With a crowd of them coming and a wave close behind, the only way to go is up.

As we climb the cliffs, the wave makes contact with a massive splash. I almost fall off, but MEL grabs me with her tail and I get back on. The tar monsters/zombies have now fused with the water, and now hands of black sludge are reaching up at us trying to drag us under as the water continues to rise. We fight and continue to go up. Oh and at some point everything (including the water) is lit ablaze and sends smoke, ash, and flames billowing into the sky above.

We reach the top. Fire and raging black water now surround everything in sight. Tar monsters and zombies swarm us. We fight them off for as long as we can. MEL manages to summon two hammers and we split them as we smash as many as we can, staying back to back the whole time.

S_____ appears from the water and grabs MELISSA. MELISSA fights her off as long as she can, but is overwhelmed when all the monsters decide to swarm her. They begin to drag her into the depths. She claws at the ground, holding on for dear life. I finally am able to get over to her and try to grab a hold of her hand. We cling and I refuse to let go.

MELISSA

GODDAMN IT, MIKE! WHY DO YOUR DEPRESSION METAPHORS HAVE TO BE SO OVERDRAMATIC???

MIKE

I CAN'T HELP IT! I HAVE A TENDENCY TO BE OVERDRAMATIC SOMETIMES, SO SUE ME!!!

MELISSA

WELL... DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I SAID ABOUT THE EXIT BEING WITHIN?

MIKE

THIS IS NO TIME FOR RIDDLES, MELISSA!

MELISSA

MAYBE NOT, BUT MAYBE THIS IS YOUR ANSWER...

With a mysterious smile on her face, she lets go. They drag her under. Suddenly there's a relative calm. The water slows, the fires die, and the monsters go back under. I stand up and look down. I can see a light where she was taken down. I know what I have to do.

I dive in. An unknown light from above is showing me the way. Below, a purple aura is visible. As I swim deeper and deeper, hands begin to converge on me. I fight them off with every fiber of my being and manage to swim down to where an unconscious MEL is being dragged by S_____. I manage to snag MEL away from the unsuspecting bitch, and as she turns around I superpunch her in the face!

I'm desperate for oxygen at this point and I'm kicking madly upwards as I hold MELISSA in both arms. More hands grab at my legs, including one from S_____. Just when it looks like all is lost, MELISSA wakes up and blasts everyone away with a superaura thingy and creates a barrier for the two of us. We look at each other with stunned surprise and swim to the surface.

We breach, and head towards that little precipice we were on. The sky is starting to clear, the fires are all out, and the waters are receding. We reach the place. We hold each other and laugh in triumph. This leads to kissing, and before you know it we're making love.

After we've finished, we cuddle up and watch as the waters have totally receded and the forest below has transformed into a lush, vibrant explosion of green. In other words, it's transformed into...

scene 11- ext. mike's happy place, ???

MELISSA

...Phew... so... are you up for a swim in the river?

MIKE

...Why not?

scene 12- ext- u of m student union, 3/16/2011, 2PM

MELISSA and I are walking along, headed homeward. She's on my back like she was earlier. It's a bright, sunny day and it's relatively warm (I'm dressed in a fleece and not my winter gear).

MELISSA

So... when you saved me... did you really punch her in the face???

MIKE

Hey, you did too!

MELISSA

Sure, but that's different. I'm a girl. I can do that. YOU can't.

MIKE

Oh, whatever! What was I supposed to do, let you drown?

MELISSA

Uhh yeah. Duh.

I look at her like "come on"

MELISSA

But for the record, I'm glad you broke the rules for once.

MIKE

Me too.

Kiss. I pass by a fundraiser thingy for Japan tsunami relief. I stop and give 'em a couple bucks.

MELISSA

Good man.

MIKE

Ah, you know. I do what I can.

MELISSA

That's all you gotta do. And what you do, big or small, is important. So... keep doing.

MIKE

Will... do.

Nuzzle. MEL looks up.

MELISSA

Check it out. Twinky Duncan is gettin' some.

We look up and see two squirrels doin' it.

MIKE

Nice.

Beat.

MIKE

How can you be sure that it's Twinky though?

MELISSA

Pfft I can't. But let's just say that it is.

MIKE

Sounds good to me.

We watch stand there and watch 'em screw. MEL wraps her tail around me and stuff.

OUTRO SEQUENCE

They escaped the weight of darkness